



Bryant-Taneda: Environmental Science 12--Water Security

Name: _____ Block: _____ Date: _____

BC Water: Nestlé Company

Vancouver Sun July 20 2015
Nestlé is about to "Suck BC Dry" of its Water Resources

July 18th update: Great news! BC will revisit water rates for industrial users, including bottling companies like Nestlé! This is a major milestone towards protecting our shared water that's so vital to the ecology, economy and quality of life in BC.

This commitment, which we secured together with our allies at WaterWealth and others who have been tirelessly fighting for better water legislation, is one step towards protecting freshwater for the public benefit.

This victory is really important -- asking for a review of water rates can seem like a small victory when there's so much big work to be done -- for instance, we need to stop companies like Nestlé from profiting from our groundwater altogether. But it's an incredibly crucial step. Right now, there's a lot we don't know about water in BC. We need the resources to do that, which is why we've been calling for higher water rates. Only when we know more about our shared water reserves can we stop irresponsible industrial use for private profit.

Watch this video of us delivering our message straight to the BC Government!

Inspired to win a campaign yourself? Start a campaign on SumOfUs Community and we will support you every step of the way.

Original petition:

As wildfires rage all over drought-stricken BC, the provincial government is still letting companies like Nestlé take water for \$2.25 per million litres.

It is outrageous that Nestlé can draw limitless amounts of Canada's natural resources to sell for a huge profit while British Columbians are asked to not water our lawns and take shorter showers.

Four months after we launched the petition to ask BC to charge fair rates for our groundwater, this is our biggest petition ever in Canada. And we are making waves with dozens of press mentions including the front page of The Province, one of BC's biggest newspapers, and TV interviews with Global News. And thanks to these press hits, political parties are debating the policy.

Tell the BC government to set fair rates for our most precious resource, so that it can pay for good stewardship of the province's water.

Nestlé's chairman says that "extremist" NGOs are responsible for the idea that water is a human right, and that water should have a market price -- apparently he thinks that the "market price" for him is \$2.25.

The cruel irony is that the new water legislation is fairly appropriate when it comes to individuals' water use -- but corporations, once again, get off with paying virtually nothing. If you or I were to bottle enough groundwater to fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool, we'd pay \$180. Nestlé will pay \$6.25. That's bananas [not acceptable].

BC has some of the purest, cleanest and most delicious water in the world -- and Nestlé doesn't think anything of sucking it out of the ground for a pittance and selling it back to us in a plastic bottle. Nor does the BC government, apparently. This new pricing structure, which was supposed to fix the problem of freeloading corporations, is even more outrageous at a time when many parts of the world are facing extreme water shortages.

We need your voice to stop this. SumOfUs members across the globe have mobilized in the hundreds of thousands to call for Nestlé to stop exploiting water rights. From Pakistan to California to Oregon to right here in Canada, we are going to make sure Nestlé can't walk away with our water without paying fair rates.

Call on the BC government to stop allowing Nestlé and other corporate freeloaders from extracting our water for next to nothing.

More information:

On top of being our biggest Canadian petition ever, this campaign has kick-started a national conversation. From



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news anchors to social media, it seems like everyone's been talking about water.

We wanted to take a few minutes here to answer the questions we've been hearing most often about this campaign.

Q. Will raising the rates change the status of water under NAFTA?

In short, no it won't -- which is good news. Freshwater reserves in their natural state are not a commodity and should never be for sale.

Right now companies like Nestle get privileged access to this water. Not only can they take unlimited amounts of groundwater for free, the government doesn't even charge administrative fees that can actually support real stewardship of freshwater resources. Our petition used the word "price" because that's how the BC government talks about water rental rates, and that's the first piece of the change we are fighting for.

It's misleading to suggest that raising the water rates in BC would have any impact on how NAFTA is applied. Right now, provinces across Canada charge water rates up to \$140 per million litres of water accessed, compared to just \$2.25 in BC. BC is the very last province in the country to start regulating groundwater, and we are calling on the BC government to step it up. And we cannot let them off the hook.

"Raising water volume rents under the new legislation is timely, and will not affect the status of groundwater under NAFTA." - Deborah Curran, University of Victoria Faculty of Law Professor.

Q. What's next for this campaign?

First and foremost, we need to hold the BC government to its word -- we need to make sure that water rates are reviewed quickly, and that they're high enough to support really strong water stewardship. On July 14, we delivered a 40-lb stack of petition signatures to Minister Polak's office to remind her that we won't be backing off until she follows through on her commitment.

Next, we'll keep working to make sure precious fresh water reserves are managed responsibly, and not for the benefit of private interests. That's why we're fighting to stop Nestle's bottled water operations in California and to prevent new bottling operations in Oregon. Here in BC, we'll keep fighting to limit groundwater licenses altogether for bottling companies like Nestle and other corporate freeloaders too.

Other Articles/Sources:

Outrage boils over as B.C. government plans to sell groundwater for \$2.25 per million litres, *The Province*, Mar 9, 2015

Nestle faces renewed criticism of their B.C. groundwater operations as drought levels increase, *Global News*, July 8, 2015

1) Within this BC Water issue, note one key (social, political, economic) aspect or problem.

2) Identify language that sets a tone in this article:

3) How would NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement: an agreement among the United States, Canada and Mexico designed to remove tariff barriers between the three countries) effect this BC and Nestle water issue?

4) What social or economic idea might be the basis for why BC and/or Canada is willing to sell BC water at a low price?
